

THE SHRINE *of* WISDOM

VOL. XIV. NO. 55.

SPRING EQUINOX 1933

ON THE UTILITY OF THE MATHEMATICAL AND METAPHYSICAL SCIENCES

(INTRODUCTION TO THEORETIC ARITHMETIC)

By THOMAS TAYLOR

PART II*

With respect to the utility of the mathematical science, which extends from the most primary knowledge to that which subsists in the lowest degree, it must be observed that *Timaëus* in Plato calls the knowledge of the mathematical disciplines the path of erudition, because it has the same ratio to the science of wholes, and the first philosophy, or metaphysics, which erudition has to virtue. For the latter disposes the soul for a perfect life by the possession of unperverted manners; but the former prepares the reasoning power and the eye of the soul to an elevation from the obscurity of objects of sense. Hence Socrates, in the *Republic*, rightly says "that the eye of the soul, which is blinded and buried by other studies, is naturally adapted to be resuscitated and excited by the mathematical disciplines alone." And again, "that it is led by these to the vision of true Being, and from images to realities, and is transferred from obscurity to intellectual Light, and, in short, is extended from the caverns (of a sensible life) and the bonds of matter to an incorporeal and impartible Essence." For the beauty and order of the mathematical reasonings, and the stability of the theory in these sciences, conjoin us with and perfectly establish us in Intelligibles, Which perpetually remain the same, are always resplendent with divine Beauty, and preserve an immutable order with reference to each other.

* For Part I see *The Shrine of Wisdom*, Vol. XIV, No. 54.

But in the *Phaedrus*, Socrates delivers to us three characters who are led back from a sensible to an intellectual life, namely, the philosopher, the lover, and the musician. And to the lover, indeed, the beginning and path of elevation is a progression from apparent beauty, employing as so many steps of ascent the middle forms of beautiful objects. But to the musician, who is allotted the third order, the transition is from the harmony in sensibles, to unapparent harmony, and the productive principles existing in these. And to the one sight, but to the other hearing, is the organ of recollection. To him, therefore, who is naturally a philosopher, whence, and by what means is the recollection of intellectual knowledge, and the excitation to real Being and Truth? For this character also, on account of its imperfection, requires a proper principle; since physical virtue is allotted an imperfect eye and imperfect manners. He, therefore, who is naturally a philosopher is excited indeed from himself, and surveys with astonishment real Being. Hence, says Plotinus, he must be disciplined in the mathematical sciences, in order that he may be accustomed to an incorporeal nature and led to the contemplation of the principles of all things. From these things, therefore, it is evident that mathematics are of the greatest utility to philosophy.

It is necessary, however, to be more explicit, and to enumerate the several particulars to which they contribute, and evince that they prepare us for the intellectual apprehensions of theology. For whatever to imperfect natures appears difficult and arduous in the truth pertaining to Divinity, these the mathematical sciences render through images, credible, manifest, and irreprehensible. For in numbers they exhibit the representations of super-essential peculiarities, and unfold in the proper objects of the reasoning part of our nature the powers of intellectual figures. Hence Plato teaches us many admirable theological dogmas through mathematical forms; and the philosophy of the Pythagoreans, employing these as veils, conceals through them the mystic tradition of divine dogmas. For such is the whole of the Sacred Discourse, what is said by Philolaus in his *Bacchics*, and the whole method of the Pythagoric narration concerning the Gods. These sciences likewise contribute in the greatest degree to the physical theory, unfolding the arrangement of those principles according to which the universe was fabricated: the

analogy which binds together every thing in the world, as *Timaëus* says, makes hostile natures friendly, and things distant familiar and sympathizing with each other, and causes simple and primary elements, and, in short, all things, to be held together by symmetry and equality; through which the whole universe likewise is perfected, receiving in its parts appropriate figures. The mathematical science also discovers numbers adapted to all generated natures, and to their periods and restitutions to their pristine state, through which we may collect the fecundity and barrenness of each. For *Timaëus* in Plato, everywhere indicating these particulars, unfolds through mathematical names the theory about the nature of wholes, adorns the generation of the elements with numbers and figures, refers to these their powers, passive qualities, and effects, and assigns as the cause of all-various mutation the acuteness and obtuseness of angles, the smoothness or roughness of sides, and the multitude or paucity of the elements.

Must we not also say that it contributes much, and in an admirable manner, to the philosophy which is called political, by measuring the times of actions, the various periods of the universe, and the numbers adapted to generations, namely, the assimilating and the causes of dissimilitude, the prolific and the perfect, and the contraries of these, those which are the suppliers of a harmonious and those which impart a disorderly and inelegant life, and, in short, those which are the sources of fertility and sterility? For these the speech of the Muses in the *Republic* of Plato unfolds, asserting that the whole *geometric number* is the cause of better and worse generations, of the indissoluble permanency of unperverted manners, and of the mutation of the best polities into such as are irrational and full of perturbation. Again, the mathematical science perfects us in ethical philosophy, inserting in our manners order and an elegant life, and delivering those figures, melodies, and motions which are adapted to virtue, and by which the Athenian guest in Plato wishes those to be perfected who are designed to possess ethical virtue from their youth. It likewise places before our view the principles of the virtues, in one way indeed in numbers, but in another figures, and in another musical symphonies, and exhibits the excesses and deficiencies of the vices, through which we are enabled to moderate and adorn our manners. On this

account also, Socrates, in the *Gorgias*, accusing Callicles of an inordinate and intemperate life, says to him, "You neglect geometry and geometric equality." But, in the *Republic*, he discovers the interval between tyrannic and kingly pleasure, according to a plane and solid generation.*

* The passage alluded to by Proclus is in the 9th book of the *Republic*, and is as follows: "What then, said I, shall we boldly say concerning all the pleasures, both respecting the avaricious and the ambitious part of the soul, that such of them as are obedient to science and reason, and, in conjunction with these, pursue and obtain the pleasures of which the prudent part is the leader, shall obtain the truest pleasures, as far as it is possible for them to attain true pleasure and in so much as they follow truth, pleasures which are properly their own; *if indeed what is best for every one, be most properly his own?* But surely, it is most properly, said he, his own. When, then, the whole soul is obedient to the philosophic part, and there is no sedition in it, every part in other respects performs its proper business, and is just, and also reaps its own pleasures, and such as are the best, and as far as is possible the most true. Certainly, indeed. But when any of the others govern, it happens that it neither attains its own pleasures, and it compels the other parts to pursue a pleasure foreign to them, and not at all true. It does so, says he. Do not then the parts which are most remote from philosophy and reason, most especially effectuate such things? Very much so. And is not that which is most remote from law and order likewise most remote from reason? It plainly is. And have not the amorous and the tyrannical desires appeared to be most remote from law and order? Extremely so. And the royal and the moderate ones the least remote? Yes. The tyrant, then, I think, shall be the most remote from true pleasure, and such as is most properly his own, and the other shall be the least. Of necessity. And the tyrant, said I, shall lead a life the most unpleasant, and the king the most pleasant. Of great necessity. Do you know then, said I, how much more unpleasant a life the tyrant leads than the king? If you tell me, said he. As there are three pleasures, as it appears, one genuine, and two illegitimate, the tyrant, in carrying the illegitimate to extremity, and flying from law and reason, dwells with slavish pleasures as his life-guards, and how far he is inferior is not easily to be told, unless it may be done in this manner. How? said he. The tyrant is somehow the third remote from the oligarchic character, for the democratic was in the middle between them. Yes. Does he not then dwell with the third image of pleasure, distant from him with reference to truth, if our former reasonings be true? Just so. But the oligarchic is the third again from the royal, if we suppose the aristocratic and the royal the same. He is the third. The tyrant then, said I, is remote from true pleasure, the third from the third. It appears so. A plain surface then, said I, may be the image

Moreover, we shall learn what great utility other sciences and arts derive from mathematics if we consider, as Socrates says in the *Philebus*, that all arts require arithmetic, mensuration, and statics; all which are comprehended in the mathematical science, and are bounded by the principles which it contains. For the distributions of numbers, the variety of measures, and the difference of weights are known by this science. To the intelligent reader, therefore, the utility of the whole of mathematics to philosophy, and other sciences and arts will, from all that has been said, be apparent.

Some, however, endeavour to subvert the dignity of the mathematical science by depriving it of beauty and good, because it does not make these the subjects of discussion, and others by endeavouring to evince that sensible experiments are more useful than the universal objects of its speculation, as, for instance, geodesia than geometry, vulgar arithmetic than that which consists in theorems, and nautical astronomy than that which demonstrates universally. For, say they, we are not made rich by our knowledge of riches, but by the use of them; nor do

of tyrannical pleasure, as to the computation of length. Certainly. But as to power, and the third augment, it is manifest by how great a distance it is remote. It is manifest, said he, to the computer at least. If now, conversely, anyone shall say, the king is distant from the tyrant as to truth of pleasure, as much as is the distance of 9, and 20, and 700, shall he not, on completing the multiplication, find him leading the more pleasant life, and the tyrant the more wretched one, by this same distance?"

The following numbers are employed by Plato in this passage. He considers the royal character as analogous to unity, the oligarchic to the number 3, and the tyrannic to the number 9. As 3, therefore, is triple of unity, the oligarchic is the third from the royal character; and in a similar manner the tyrant is distant from the oligarchist by the triple in number. For 9 is the triple of 3, just as 3 is the triple of 1. But 9 is a plane number, the length of which is 3, and also its breadth. And a tyrannic, says Plato, is the last image of a royal life. He also calls 3 a *power*, because unity being multiplied by it, and itself by itself, and 9 by it, there will be produced 3, 9, 27. But he calls the third augment 27, arising from the multiplication of the power 3, and producing depth or a solid number. Lastly, 27 multiplied into itself, produces 729, which may be considered as a perfect multiplication, this number being the 6th power of 3; and 6 is a perfect number. Hence, as the king is analogous to 1, he is said, by Plato, to be 729 times distant from the tyrant.

we become happy by a knowledge of felicity, but by living happily. Hence we must confess that not speculative but practical mathematics contribute to human life and actions. For those who are ignorant of the reasons of things, but are experienced in particulars, excel in every respect, in what is useful to human life, those who are engaged in theory alone.

Against objections, then, of this kind we shall reply by showing the beauty of the mathematical disciplines from those arguments by which Aristotle endeavours to persuade us. For these three things are in a remarkable degree effective of beauty, in bodies and in souls, namely, order, symmetry, and the definite; since corporeal deformity, indeed, arises from material irregularity, privation of form, and the dominion of the indefinite in the composite body. But the baseness of the soul originates from its irrational part being moved in a confused and disorderly manner, and from its being discordant with reason, and not receiving from thence its proper limitation. Hence beauty has its essence in the contraries to these, namely, in order, symmetry, and that which is definite. These, however, we may survey in the most eminent degree in the mathematical science; order, indeed, in the perpetual exhibition of things posterior and more various, from such as are first and more simple. For things subsequent are always suspended from those that precede them; the former having the relation of a principle, but the latter of things consequent to the first hypotheses. But we may perceive symmetry in the concord of the things demonstrated with each other, and the reference of all of them to Intellect. For Intellect is the measure of all science, from which it receives its principles, and to which it converts the learners. And the definite is seen in the perpetually stable and immutable objects of its theory. For the subjects of its knowledge do not subsist differently at different times, like the objects of opinion and sense, but they present themselves to the view invariably the same, and are bounded by intellectual forms. If, therefore, these particulars are in an eminent degree effective of beauty, but the mathematical sciences are characterized by these, it is manifest that in these the beautiful subsists. Indeed, how is it possible this should not be the case with a science which is supernally illuminated by Intellect, to which it tends, and to which it hastens to transfer us from the obscure information of sense?

But we ought to judge of its utility, not looking to the conveniences and necessities of human life. For thus also we must acknowledge that contemplative virtue itself is useless; since this separates itself from human concerns, to which it does not tend, nor is, in short, desirous of making these the objects of its knowledge. For Socrates, in the *Theaetetus*, speaking of the coryphaean philosophers, or those that philosophize in the most eminent degree, says that through intellectual energy they are separated from all habitude to human life, and from an attention to its necessities and wants, and that they extend the reasoning power of the soul without impediment to the contemplation of real Beings. The mathematical science, therefore, must be considered as desirable for its own sake, and for the contemplation it affords, and not on account of the utility it administers to human concerns. If, however, it be requisite to refer its utility to something else, it must be referred to intellectual knowledge. For it leads us to this, and prepares the eye of the soul for the knowledge of incorporeal wholes, purifying it, and removing the impediments arising from sensible objects. As, therefore, we do not say that the whole of cathartic or purifying virtue is useful, or the contrary, looking to the utility of the sensible life, but regarding the advantage of the contemplative life; thus also it is fit to refer the end of the mathematical science to Intellect, and the whole of wisdom. Hence, the energy about it deserves our most serious attention, both on its own account and on account of an intellectual life.

It is also manifest, as Aristotle says, that this science is desirable of itself to its votaries, because, though no reward was proposed to its investigators, yet, in a short time, the mathematical theory has received such an abundant increase. Besides, all men who have in the smallest degree experienced its utility are willingly employed in its pursuit, and are desirous of being at leisure for this purpose, omitting every other concern. Hence, those who despise the knowledge of mathematics have not tasted of the pleasures it contains. The mathematical science, therefore, is not to be despised because its theoretic part does not contribute to human utility; for its ultimate progressions, and such as energize in conjunction with matter, consider as their end an advantage of this kind; but, on the contrary, we should admire its immateriality, and the good which it contains

in itself alone. For, in short, when men were entirely disengaged from the care of necessary concerns, they converted themselves to the investigation of the mathematical disciplines, and this, indeed, with the greatest propriety. For things by which we are nourished, and which are connascent with sensible objects, first employed the attention of mankind; but afterwards, those concerns which liberate the soul from a life of sense and produce its recollection of real Being. After this manner, therefore, we are engaged in the pursuit of necessities prior to that of things honourable on their own account, and of things connascent with sense prior to such as are apprehended by intellectual energy. For the life of the human soul is naturally adapted to proceed from the imperfect to perfection. And thus much in answer to those who despise the mathematical science.

Again, with respect to the name mathematics, it appears to me, says Proclus, that such an appellation of the science which is conversant with the objects of the reasoning power was not like many names invented by casual persons, but, as it is also said to have been, by the Pythagoreans. For they perceived that the whole of what is called mathesis is reminiscence* not externally inserted in souls, in the same manner as phantasms from sensible objects are impressed in the imagination, nor adventitious like the knowledge resulting from opinion, but excited indeed from things apparent, and inwardly exerted from the reasoning power converted to itself. They likewise saw that, though reminiscence might be shown from many particulars, yet it was evinced in a most eminent manner, as Plato also says, from the mathematical disciplines. For if anyone, says he, is led to the diagrams, he will from them easily prove that discipline is reminiscence. Hence also Socrates, in the *Meno*, shows from this mode of reasoning that to *learn* is nothing else than for the soul to *recollect* the productive principles which she contains. But this is because that which recollects is the discursive energy of reason, which is essentialized in the principles of mathematics, and which causally comprehends the mathematical sciences in itself, though it may not energize according to them. It contains, therefore, all of them essentially and

* i.e. the recovery of lost knowledge, on the hypothesis that the soul is truly immortal, and therefore had an existence prior to that of the present life.

occultly; but it unfolds each of them into light when it is freed from the impediments originating from sense. For the senses connect the soul with divisible objects, imaginations fill her with figured motions, and appetites draw her down to a passive life. But every thing divisible is an impediment to our conversion to ourselves, every thing figured obscures that knowledge which is unaccompanied with figure, and every thing passive is an obstacle to impassive energy. When, therefore, we have removed all these from the discursive power of reason, then we shall be able to know by it the productive principles which it contains, then we shall become scientific in energy and exert our essential knowledge. But while we are bound, and have the eye of the soul closed, we shall never obtain the perfection adapted to our nature. Mathesis, therefore, is the reminiscence of the eternal productive principles inherent in the soul; and the mathematical science is on this account the knowledge which contributes to our recollection of these principles. Hence the employment of this science is evident from its name. For it is motive of knowledge, excites intelligence, purifies the discursive energy of reason, unfolds the forms which we essentially contain, removes the oblivion and ignorance which we derive from the regions of sense, and dissolves the bonds through which we are held in captivity by the irrational nature.

MYSTIC VERSE

When everything that is sincerely good
 And perfectly divine,
 With Truth, and Peace, and Love, shall ever shine
 Above the Supreme Throne
 Of Him, to Whose happy-making sight alone
 When once our heavenly-guided soul shall climb,
 Then, all this earthly grossness quit,
 Attired with stars we shall forever sit
 Triumphant over Death, and Chance, and thee, O Time!

—*Milton.*

The virtue and motion of the sacred orbs,
 As mallet by the workman's hand, must needs
 By blessed movers be inspired. This Heaven,
 Made beauteous by so many luminaries,
 From the deep spirit, that moves its circling sphere,
 Its image takes and impress as a seal:
 And as the soul, that dwells within your dust,
 Through members different, yet together form'd,
 In different powers resolves itself; e'en so
 The intellectual efficacy unfolds
 Its goodness multiplied throughout the stars;
 On its own unity revolving still.

—*Dante.*

Heaven-born, the soul a heavenward course must hold;
 Beyond the visible world she soars to seek
 (For what delights the sense is false and weak)
 Ideal Form, the universal mould.
 The wise man, I affirm, can find no rest
 In that which perishes; nor will he lend
 His heart to aught that doth on time depend.

—*Wordsworth.*

Immortal Heat, O let Thy greater flame
 Attract the lesser to it; let the fires
 Which shall consume the world first make it tame,
 And kindle in our hearts such true desires

As may consume our lusts and make Thee way.
 Then shall our hearts pant Thee, then shall our brain
 All her inventions on Thine altar lay,
 And there in hymns send back Thy fire again.

—*George Herbert.*

O Father of eternal life, and all
 Created glories under Thee,
 Resume my spirit from this world of thrall
 Into true liberty.

—*Henry Vaughan.*

SAINT CATHERINE OF SIENA

In the history of fourteenth-century Europe, darkened by warfare both secular and ecclesiastical, by widespread violence, lawlessness, and corruption in Church and State, there stand out, like brilliant guiding lights, the lives of a number of men and women faithful to high ideals for which they lived and died. One of the most remarkable of these great souls was Catherine of Siena who, in her short life of thirty-three years, made a very deep impression both on the minds of men and on the history of the Christian Church. Her teachings, written in the vernacular and thus available to a wider circle than was usual in her times, explained the basic doctrines of the Church relating to the duties of a Christian in a simple manner within the capacity of all to understand, but with a sincerity and depth which rendered them equally acceptable to learned divines, to parish priests, and to Christian laymen.

She advocated for all the use of the reasoning mind as well as of the aspirations, the affections, and the will, blended in a consecrated life; but she also rejoiced in the diversity of the Way of Heaven, pointing to the universal Ideals of the Divine Unity, Goodness, Beauty, and Truth, as the all-embracing Powers whereby the manifold and various activities of men could be united in service of God and of the world.

In the midst of strife she upheld before the rulers of Europe the ideal of a world-wide brotherhood of mankind, to be realized through the co-operation and regeneration of the nations, united in the organism of the Church, under one Head. In this conception she was far ahead of her time; but although it was impossible of realization, she accomplished a great work, not only in the guidance of those with whom she came in contact, but also in the removal of some of the most flagrant of the abuses which had undermined the authority of the Church in Europe, and in consolidating the faithful among the ministers and followers of religion. She could not avert the long-threatened disruption, but she was able to see and point out to others the necessity for this fiery trial, and the good which would ultimately result from it.

Catherine Benincasa, the youngest of twenty-five children, was one of twin daughters born to Lapa Benincasa and her husband

Giacomo, a Sienese dyer, on Palm Sunday, March 25, 1347. Her contemporaries speak of the child's joyousness, frankness, and charm, of her devotion to holy things, and of the vision she described at the age of six when, suddenly, in the heavens, she saw the Lord Jesus Christ. While rapt in wonder she received a blessing from His outstretched Hand, and from that day she dedicated herself to God. At the age of seven she vowed herself to virginity and devotion to the Supreme Beauty. She was especially attracted to the Order of St. Dominic, which aimed, above all, at the salvation of souls, and as she grew older she imposed upon herself severe disciplines, abstaining from food and sleep. These practices distressed her parents, but she met with no serious opposition until, at the age of twelve, as was customary, a marriage was arranged for her. Catherine strongly resisted this plan and, on the advice of a Friar Preacher related to the family, she cut off her long and beautiful hair. This action aroused the intense indignation of her family, who subjected her to a deliberate persecution, denying her any privacy for prayer or meditation, and making her do the work of a kitchen-maid in order to keep her fully occupied about the house. Regardless of their bitter and frequent reproaches, Catherine remained inflexible, but her patient, gentle, and cheerful submission to harsh treatment at last opened her parents' eyes. Her father relented, and she was allowed to follow her conscience and inclinations. She was given a room to herself, and at once entered upon a life of solitude and inner activity, coupled with extreme asceticism. During a period of three years she learned to converse with the Inner Lord Whose Living Presence had become the most significant factor in her life. Through excessive austerity her physical health was seriously undermined, and about the age of seventeen she became dangerously ill, but her life was saved through her great vitality, and through the joy that came to her in the promised realization of a long-cherished desire to enter the Dominican Order of the Mantellate. This secular-religious Order took the threefold religious vow, but its members lived at home, following both the contemplative and the active life.

In the three years' seclusion, during which she learned to read, Catherine suffered much from inner conflicts and temptations, but she also received great spiritual consolations in a series of mystical experiences culminating in the "perfection of faith."

This "mystical espousal to Christ in faith" enabled her to overcome her great love of solitude, and, in obedience to an inner prompting, to re-enter active life in her family and among her fellow citizens. Her holiness, generosity, kindness, and unfailing sympathy made her greatly beloved. She never refused any who needed temporal or spiritual help, and gradually her fame began to spread, for it was said that her very touch healed the sick.

She had a genius for friendship: spontaneous, joyous, open, and absolutely sincere herself, by her own love and sympathy she attracted that of others, and called forth the best in them. One of her disciples, Stephen Maconi, wrote of her: "At her mere presence the temptation of the enemy disappeared; the sun in its meridional splendour does not more instantaneously scatter the darkness. All the world recognized her as the image of the virtues, the perfect mirror of Christian purity."

She did not, however, escape slanderous accusations of the envious, but to these she gave no heed.

In 1368, a year after her return to active life, a revolution broke out in Siena and the family trade was ruined. Her father had died, and her mother was left in her care. By this time Catherine had gathered around her a small group of devoted followers, some of whom she had met through her connection with a confraternity which, since the first introduction of Christianity into Siena, had met in the catacombs of one of the hospitals which she visited. Here centred the real religious life of Siena. Regular meetings were held for Mass and meditation, and work was carried out among the poor of the city. This group formed the nucleus of the spiritual family which venerated as their mother this girl of twenty-four.

One of her lifelong followers was Alexia, a fellow Mantellata, who shared with Francesca Gori the secretarial duties. The brethren included the holy F. Thomas della Fonte, who acted as her director and confessor until, when Catherine was twenty-seven, he judged the learned Raymund of Capua to be better fitted for the work, and gave him the notes upon which Raymund based his famous Legend of St. Catherine. For ten years she was helped in her studies by F. Thomas Antonio, who tells of her interior life.

Among her adherents were many of the "Hermits of St. Augustine," whose Prior, a scholar of genius and a Master of

Theology, with his friend Gabriel of Volterra, also a man of scholarship and influence, were converted to her discipleship in a remarkable manner. They disapproved strongly of Catherine's influence and were determined to refute her teachings and put her to shame. With this purpose in view they paid her a visit, and, in the presence of many of her followers, propounded to her the most difficult and complicated of theological questions. Catherine, "her countenance all beaming with Divine zeal," answered them from the writings of the saints, rebuked them for seeking only the husk of truth, and implored them to turn from their "inflated science." So impressed were they with her words and her saintliness that "these two wolves became tender lambs," as the narrator tells us, and were from thenceforth her faithful disciples.

Another of the Hermits of St. Augustine, an Englishman, F. William Flete, greatly venerated her, and at her dictation wrote a treatise dealing with her interior life. After her death he wrote a long composition in her praise. He used to say: "You none of you know her: the Pope himself might think it an honour to be one of her sons. Truly the Holy Ghost dwelleth in her." In an account of her he wrote: "No one in affliction ever went to her without receiving comfort, and to all she was a star of consolation. What teaching she would give us: how to live, how to direct our souls! She would say, 'Let us begin afresh every day.' How she would warm the tepid heart and rouse the negligent, for to her every soul was open. O holy Mother, we were not worthy of your presence!"

It was no doubt through her association with these and other saintly scholars that Catherine gained a thorough acquaintance with the best of the writings, both sacred and secular, available in her day. She kept in touch with the political needs of the times through her friendship with several of the noble families of Siena.

One of her most devoted companions was Neri di Landoccio dei Paglieresi, a young man of great ability, but sensitive and inclined to melancholy and an ever-recurring doubt of the forgiveness of his sins. Catherine, in writing to him, frequently dwelt upon the Love and Mercy of God. "Is not God more ready to forgive than we to offend? Is He not our Physician, and we His sick children? Is not sadness the worst of our faults?

Yes, it certainly is, my dear son. Open your eyes, then, to the light of faith, and see how much you are beloved of God, and, seeing this love, do not be troubled because you likewise see the ignorance and coldness of your heart; but let self-knowledge only increase your humility and kindle your love. Courage, then, and let a lively faith and firm hope triumph over the demon who would trouble you!"

Neri brought many friends to Catherine, among whom were Francesco Malevolti, "young, hot-tempered, and arrogant on account of his family and nation," but who, through her influence, became the very opposite of what he had been before; and Stephen Maconi, of great talent and remarkable simplicity of character, who became one of her secretaries and her close friend.

By the year 1369 the conviction of the increasing extent of her mission was dawning upon Catherine's mind. This was intensified in the following year by a mystical experience, named by her biographers "the perfection of charity," wherein her own will perfectly reflected the Divine Will to which it was united. At this time, because of her fervently increasing love of God, she prayed passionately for release from the body, or, if God willed her to live, for participation in the sufferings of Jesus. Thence began a period of very great physical and mental suffering, which brought her to such an extremity that for four days she lay as one dead. Her sorrow was great on returning to life, for she had experienced a foretaste of the joys of Heaven; but she had also received the interior command to save souls, not only in her own city, but wherever God might send her. From this time her fame began to spread far beyond Siena; but her unusual mode of life, her austerities, her frequent ecstasies, her keen insight into the motives of others, and her increasing influence gave offence to the envious both in the religious and lay communities, and many malicious rumours were circulated.

In May 1374, at the age of twenty-seven, she was called to Florence by the Master-General of the Dominican Order, probably to answer certain false charges. During her short stay she made many friends, with whom she afterwards corresponded. Her letters show how unerringly and compassionately she dealt with their particular weaknesses and special needs, and supplied the individual encouragement required. Even the metaphors and

illustrations used were appropriate to the tastes and temperament of the one addressed.

Two of the essentials of the Christian life emphasized by her in these letters are kindness in judgment of one's neighbours, and the duty and privilege of loving God in one's neighbours. To one of her fellow Mantellate she writes: "Listen, daughter and dearest sister. I want us to do two special things in order that ignorance may not hinder our perfection. Often seeming to ourselves to judge aright we shall judge crookedly, and this because we make ourselves judges of the minds of our fellow creatures which are for God alone to judge. But I want the lesson to be learned reasonably: if God expressly, not only once or twice, but more often, reveals the fault of a neighbour to our mind, we ought never to tell it in particular to the one whom it concerns, but to correct in common all the vices of those whom it befalls us to judge. On thy lips let silence abide, and holy talk of virtues and disdain of vice. And any vice that it may seem to thee to recognize in others, do thou ascribe it both to them and to thyself, using ever a true humility. If that vice really exists in any such person he will correct himself better, seeing himself so gently understood, and will say that to thee which thou wouldst have said to him.

"Now I will tell thee of the other thing which I beg that we rebuke in ourselves, if sometimes the devil or our own very evil construction of matters torments us by making us want to see all the servants of God walking in the same way as ourselves. For it frequently happens that a soul which sees itself advance by way of great penance would like to send all people by the same way; while sometimes it will happen that the man is doing better and being more virtuous than his critic, although he does not do as much penance. For perfection does not consist in killing and macerating the body, but in killing our perverted self-will."

To another Mantellata, Caterina, she gave similar counsel: "Thou knowest that every virtue receives life from love; and love is gained in love, that is, by raising the eye of our mind to behold how much we are beloved of God. Seeing ourselves loved, we cannot do otherwise than love.

"So thou seest that we conceive virtues through God, and bring them to birth for our neighbour. For as God has loved

thee of grace, so He wills that since thou canst not return this love to Him, thou return it to thy neighbour. Neither if thou art wronged, nor if thou shouldst see love towards thee or thy joy or profit lessened, must thou lessen or stint love towards thy neighbour; but love him tenderly, enduring his faults, and beholding with great consolation and reverence the servants of God. Since we can neither be of profit or service to God by the love which we bear Him, we ought to serve our neighbour with true and heartfelt love. In no other way or wise can we serve Him."

In a letter to F. William Flete she wrote: "In truly perfect souls self-will is dead, and in nothing do they see the will of man, but only that of God. Such souls have a foretaste of life eternal."

She encouraged F. Raymund, oppressed by the difficulty of his mission to Avignon, with the words: "So you see that we are not to flee nor to grieve in the time of darkness, since from darkness is born light. Out of impatience is won patience. The soul finds itself become perfect in many storms and temptations. In no other wise does one ever arrive at the harbour of perfection. Joy, Father, and exult, and comfort you, without any servile fear: and fear not for anything that you should see happen. But comfort you, for perfection is near you. Carry on all your works with living faith. Comfort you, comfort you, because the sweet Primal Truth has promised to fulfil your and my desire for you. Rejoice in Christ Crucified!"

On Catherine's return from Florence to Siena the city was in the grip of the plague. Catherine and her band of faithful friends worked devotedly among the sick and dying, comforting, healing, fortifying them. As the sphere of her influence increased she was able to begin to carry out her two dearly cherished projects: the reform of the Church and the organization of a Crusade. The corruption, luxury, and tyranny, too frequently found in the priesthood of the Church, filled her with grief and horror. The Legates in Italy were foreigners, unable to speak Italian and interested chiefly in the acquisition of wealth and political power. Catherine called them "eaters and destroyers of souls, not converters, but devourers. . . . In whatsoever direction thou mayest look among secular and religious priests, clerics, and prelates, small or great, young or old, and of every kind, thou

seest nothing but offences against Me, and the stench of mortal sin. They seize honour and glory for themselves. . . . They only take care of temporal things and have abandoned My lambs."

The growing popular distrust of the clergy was precipitated in Florence, during the famine in Tuscany, by the action of the Legate of Bologna, who in 1374, in defiance of the Pope's command, refused the Florentines corn from his territories, and sent them a threatening message. The Florentines placed upon this the worst interpretation, and at once began to form a league against the Church.

The disaffection spread rapidly, and within a year eighty cities had joined the rebels. Pope Gregory XI appealed to Catherine, authorizing her to negotiate in his name with the leaders of the revolt. Although in feeble health, she carried out her mission successfully, and then directed her efforts towards the root of the trouble, namely, the appointment of "bad pastors and bad governors," together with the continued absence of the Pope from Rome, and his consequent separation from his people.

In 1376 fresh trouble broke out in Florence, culminating in an interdict against that city, and the advance of the papal army towards it. The Florentines, infuriated, threatened to break off all relations with the Church, and Catherine was appealed to by a body of responsible and loyal citizens. She hastened to Avignon to intercede with Gregory for Florence, sustained and comforted in her mission by the memory of a recent vision in which she had received the Divine commission to bear the cross and the olive branch to the opposing parties.

In spite of intense and prolonged opposition both from the Florentines, among whom bitter feuds were raging, and from the Pope's chief advisers, the French Cardinals, Catherine's indomitable efforts for peace were finally successful. She persuaded Pope Gregory to return to Rome in 1377, but his health rapidly failed and he died the following year. Before his death, however, he had sent Catherine to Florence on a last mission of reconciliation. Under the new Pope, Urban VI, terms of peace were made, and in 1378 Catherine was able to return to Siena, where, at the request of her disciples, she began to write her famous *Dialogue*.

In the autumn of this year fresh hostilities were provoked through the drastic reforms inaugurated by Urban. Catherine

was again summoned by him to Rome, for the French Cardinals, who had withdrawn to Avignon and had secured the allegiance of the majority of the Italian Cardinals, gathered an army and advanced against Urban, proclaiming as Pope Count Robert of Geneva, notorious for the massacre of Cesena, who took the name of Clement VII. Urban's army forced them to withdraw from Rome, and he appealed to the faithful in the Church for their allegiance.

This was the beginning of a schism in the Church which divided the Christian nations for more than forty years. Catherine made every possible effort to heal the breach, but it was beyond her power. She succeeded, however, in making peace between Urban and the Roman people, whom he had alienated by his severity, and this was her last public service to the Church.

The last years of Catherine's life were marked by great difficulties and disappointments in her work, and by increasing physical infirmities. For many years she had had great and unusual difficulty in eating any kind of food, and during the last few weeks of her life vitality seemed to be miraculously sustained in her body, for she took no food but that received in the consecrated Elements. She bore her continual bodily sufferings and fatigue very joyfully, and received with gentleness and patient courtesy all who visited her. Her weakness increased, but although her body was frail and emaciated in the extreme, her countenance shone with Divine radiance. When the time of her death drew near, unable to raise herself from her bed of planks, she called around her the beloved "family" and directed them in the "principles and foundations of all perfection." These were:

The freeing of the heart from all sensitive love of created things apart from God.

The fixing of the soul's eye upon the light of living faith, so that the mind is certain that all is given by love, and is thus obedient in all trials.

The necessity for humble, faithful, devoted, and continual prayer, both vocal and mental.

The necessity for refraining from all judgment of others, and from idle speech regarding others.

The necessity for hoping confidently in unfailing Divine Providence.

The danger of self-love, and the necessity for living "in the cell of self-knowledge, in compunction."

"Love one another," she concluded. "I am leaving a place of many sufferings, and I go to the peaceful Sea, the Eternal God. . . . And I promise you that I will be more perfectly with you, and of more use to you, than ever I could be here, because I am leaving darkness to pass into the True and Eternal Light."

Finally, on the Sunday before Ascension Day at the hour of Sext, saying, after the example of the words of Jesus, "Father, into Thy Hands I commend my soul and spirit," "sweetly, and with a face all shining and angelical, she bowed her head and died."

The canonization of St. Catherine took place fifty years after the healing of the breach in the Church and during the pontificate of Pius II. In the Bull of canonization it is stated: "Never did a word proceed from her lips that was not holy and pious. . . . No one ever approached her without going away wiser and better. Her doctrine was infused, not acquired. She replied with consummate prudence to professors of theology, and even to the bishops of illustrious churches, and satisfied them so entirely that those who had gone to her as fierce lions and wolves became, before they left her, as gentle as lambs. . . . She showed to each one, with a joyful countenance, what they should do, and what avoid, and with wonderful power appeased discords, destroyed hatreds, and put an end to many bloody feuds."

The written teachings of St. Catherine are given in her many letters and in the *Dialogue*. They clearly show her great love of humanity, her reasonableness and insight, and her faith in the response of the soul to the Ideals of Unity, Beauty, Truth, and Goodness. In the *Dialogue* is given definite guidance with regard to the needs of the soul, and the triple pathway to perfection.

This *Book of Divine Teaching*, as it was first called, shows the soul listening to the inner Word. It expresses the traditional teachings of the Church in a simple and vivid manner which brings them in some measure within the capacity of the least instructed.

The *Dialogue* is divided into four sections, which deal respectively with Divine Providence, Discretion, Prayer, and Obedience.

In the section on Divine Providence the beauty of the holy soul united to God is first shown, and then the needs of souls in the world are described. These are to be met by their response

to the Ideal of Unitive Love for all mankind, manifested in deeds of goodness. This Providential Love is to be approached through self-knowledge; and the way to self-knowledge is to look at the Divine. "Open the eye of thine intellect, and gaze into Me, and thou shalt see the beauty of My rational creature and of holy souls united to God." This recalls the teaching of Socrates in the First Alcibiades.

Through prayer the soul is led back to Grace by Divine Providence along varying paths—through pain, through disciplines, through desire of amendment—to virtues, which are the gifts of Divine Grace.

The section on Discretion deals with the importance of right valuation and of justice. The need for temperance in penance is emphasized, for penance is only a means, and has in itself no virtue, while immoderate penance is often rooted in self-will and secret pride. In her letters on this subject she never recommends the extreme severity of her own early self-imposed disciplines, but advises due regard for the necessities of the body, which, as an instrument of the soul, should be kept in good order.

In describing the practice of justice, through which all creatures receive what is their due, she uses the simile of the Bridge of God's Son, by which the soul may, if it so chooses, pass over "the tempestuous sea of this dark life." The Bridge has three steps. The first is the soul's aspiration to God; the second is the tasting of the Love of God which strips the soul of vice and engenders virtue; the third is the peace of the soul which is raised above the earth and purified.

The section on Prayer deals with the necessity for singleness of purpose, prudence, and method in prayer; since prayer is the beginning and the end of the way to God. Mental prayer should be used. "She should try to elevate her mind in My Love, so that self-knowledge and consideration of her own defects may make her recognize My Goodness in herself." Prayer must be accompanied by service, and the opening of the eye of the intellect. "Each one, according to his condition, ought to exert himself for the salvation of souls, for this exercise lies at the root of a holy will." That soul deceives itself which chooses its own peace of mind and the sensitive love of consolations and mental visions, rather than the service of others. Perfect love, which is the fruit of prayer, is shown by the death of self-will,

which brings fearlessness of pain; the flowering of patience, fortitude, and perseverance, which brings a prepotency of the virtues over the sensitive passions, and a hatred of imperfection; and the practice of the Presence of God, with the increasing power to "gaze into the Deity with the eye of intellect," which brings perfection of service.

Of the light of reason or intellect she writes: "With this light Thomas Aquinas saw Me, wherefore he acquired the light of much science; also Augustine, Jerome, and the doctors and My saints."

The nature of the light of reason is dealt with at some length. Its root is in the True Light, and its power is threefold:

- (i) That of knowing the nature and the things in the world.
 - (ii) That of knowing virtue, and the reason of virtue.
 - (iii) That of knowing perfection: through union with the perfect Will of God it reaches the perfect Love of God.
- Then the soul becomes universal in its outlook.

"When, therefore, the soul has arrived at seeing, knowing, and tasting in its full sweetness this Light, she shuns no labours, but eats at the table of the most holy Cross the food of the honour of Me, the Eternal God, and of the salvation of souls; seeking no reward, either from Me or from creatures, because she is stripped of mercenary love, and is clothed in perfect light, loving Me in perfect purity. Such as these have lost themselves. . . . Those who are in this sweet light know it, and remain constantly in peace and quiet, and no one scandalizes them, for they have cut away that by which stumbling-blocks are caused—their self-will.

"Such a man rejoices in everything, nor does he make himself a judge of My servants, nor of any rational creature; but rejoices in every condition and in every manner of holiness which he sees, saying: thanks be to Thee, Eternal Father, Who hast in Thy House many mansions. And he rejoices more in the different ways of holiness than if he were to see all travelling by one road; because in this way he sees the greatness of My Goodness become more manifest. . . . Even when he sees something evil, he does not fall into judgment, but rather, with true and holy compassion, intercedes with Me for sinners, saying with perfect humility, 'To-day it is thy turn, and to-morrow it will be mine, unless the Divine Grace preserve me.'"

The section on Prayer closes with a consideration of the dignity of the priestly office, and of the manner of life fitting for a priest.

The last section, on Obedience, treats of general and particular obedience. The fruit of obedience is charity, which alone enters into Eternal Life and Joy; for charity gives joy, largeness, generosity, sincerity, and openness. These fruits are received in proportion to the love and promptitude of the truly obedient.

In her own life St. Catherine fulfilled the law of perfect obedience, and received the answer to her prayer: "Good, Blessed and Incomprehensible, Good Inestimable; Beauty above all Beauty; Wisdom above all Wisdom—for Thou art Wisdom Itself. . . . O Sweet without any bitter, O Eternal Trinity . . . clothe me, clothe me with Thee, O Eternal Truth, that I may run my mortal course with true obedience and the light of holy faith."

SEED THOUGHTS

When somewhat of the Perfect Good is discovered and revealed within the Soul of man, as it were in a glance or flash, the Soul conceiveth a longing to approach unto this Perfect Goodness and unite herself with the Father. And the stronger this yearning groweth, the more is revealed unto her; and the more is revealed unto her, the more she is drawn towards the Father, and her desire quickened. Thus is the Soul drawn and quickened into a union with the Eternal Goodness.

—*Theologia Germanica.*

God hath suited every creature He hath made with a convenient good to which it tends, and in the attainment of which it rests and is satisfied. . . . Now this is the excellency of man, that he is made capable of a communion with his Maker, and, because capable of it, is unsatisfied without it; the Soul, being cut out (so to speak) to that largeness, cannot be filled with less. . . . It is made for Him, and is therefore still restless till it meets with Him.

S. T. Coleridge.

A DISCOURSE ON THE IMMORTALITY
OF THE SOUL*

By JOHN SMITH (Cambridge Platonist)

IV

We find frequently such motions within ourselves which first are, before we take notice of them, and which, by their own turbulency and impetuousness, force us to an advertency: as those fiery spirits, and that inflamed blood, which sometimes fly up into the head; or those gross and earthly fumes that disturb our brains; the stirring of many other humours which beget within us grief, melancholy, anger, or mirth, or other passions, which have their rise from such causes as we were not aware of, or to which we gave no consent to create this trouble to us; besides all those passions and perceptions which are begotten within us by some external motions which derive themselves through our senses, and, fiercely knocking at the door of our minds and understandings, force them sometimes from their deepest debates and musings of some other thing, to open to them, and give them an audience.

Now, as to such motions as these, it being necessary for the preservation of our bodies that our souls should be acquainted with them, man's body was so contrived, and his soul so united to it, that they might have a speedy access to the soul. Indeed, some ancient philosophers thought that the soul, descending more deeply into the body, as they express it, first begat these corporeal motions unknown to itself by reason of its deep immersion, which afterwards, by their impetuousness, excited its advertency. But, whatsoever truth there is in that assertion, we clearly find from the relation of our own souls themselves that our soul disowns them, and so acknowledgeth no such motions to have been so busy by her commission; neither knows what they are, from whence they arise, or whither they tend, until she hath duly examined them. But these corporeal motions, as they seem to arise from nothing else but merely from the

* Abridged from *Select Discourses*. For Part I see *The Shrine of Wisdom*, Vol. XIV, No. 54.

machina of the body itself; so they could not at all be sensated but by the soul.

Neither, indeed, are all our own corporeal actions perceived by us, but only those that may serve to maintain a good correspondence and intelligence between the soul and body, and so foment and cherish that sympathy between them which is necessary for the subsistence and well-being of the whole man in this mundane state. And therefore there is very little of that which is commonly done in our body which our souls are at all informed of. The constant circulation of the blood through our veins and arteries; the common motions of our animal spirits in our nerves; the maceration of food within our stomachs, and the distribution of chyle and nourishment to every part that wants the relief of it; the constant flux and reflux of more sedate humours within us; the dissipations of our corporeal matter by insensible transpiration, and the accesses of new matter in the room of it; all this we are little acquainted with by any vital energy which ariseth from the union of soul and body: and therefore, when we would acquaint ourselves with the anatomy and vital functions of our own bodies, we are fain to use the same course and method that we would to find out the same things in any other kind of animal, as if our souls had as little to do with any of these in our own bodies as they have in the bodies of any brute creature.

But, on the other side, we know as well that many things that are done by us are done at the dictate and by the commission of our own wills; and therefore we know how, without any great store of discursive inquiry, to attribute all such actions as these to their own proper causes, as seeing the efflux and propagation of them. We do not, by a naked speculation, know our bodies first to have need of nourishment, and then, by the edict of our wills, enjoin our appetites to put themselves into a hungry and craving posture within us, by affecting the tunics of the stomach; but we first find our own souls solicited by these motions which yet we are able to gainsay, and to deny those petitions which they offer up to us. We know that we commonly meditate and discourse such arguments as we ourselves please: we mould designs, and draw up a plot of means answerable thereto, according as the free vote of our own soul determines; and use our own bodies many times, notwithstanding

all the reluctance of their nature, only as our instruments to serve the will and pleasure of our souls. All which, as they evidently manifest a true distinction between the soul and the body, so they do as evidently prove the supremacy and dominion which the soul hath over the body. Our moralists frequently dispute what kind of government that is whereby the soul, or rather will, rules over the sensitive appetite, which they ordinarily resolve to be *imperium politicum*; though I should rather say, that all good men have rather a true *despotic power* over their sensitive faculties and over the whole body, though they use it only according to the laws of reason and discretion. And therefore the Platonists and Stoics thought the soul of man to be absolutely freed from all the power of astral necessity and uncontrollable impressions arising from the subordination and mutual sympathy and dependence of all mundane causes; which is their notion of fate. Neither ever durst that bold astrology which presumes to tell the fortunes of all corporeal essences, attempt to enter into the secrets of man's soul, or predict the destinies thereof. And, indeed, whatever the destinies may be, that are contained in the vast volume of an Infinite and Almighty Mind, yet we evidently find a "liberty of will within ourselves," in spite of the stubborn malice of all second causes. And though the subtilty of some wits may have made it difficult to find out whether the understanding or the will, or some other faculty of the soul, be the first mover, whence the *motus primo primus* (as they call it) proceeds; yet we know it is originally the soul itself, whose vital acts they all are: and although it be not "the first cause, as deriving all its virtue from itself," as Simplicius distinguisheth, yet it is "vitally co-working with the first causes of all." But, on the other side, when we come to examine those motions which arise from the body, this stream runs so far underground that we know not how to trace it to its head; but we are fain to analyse the whole artifice, looking from the spirits to the blood, from that to the heart, viewing all along the mechanical contrivance of veins and arteries: neither know we, after all our search, whether there be any *perpetuum mobile* in our own bodies, or whether all the motions thereof be only the redundancy of some external motions without us; nor how to find the first mover in nature; and though we could find out that, yet we know that there is a fatal determination which sits

in all the wheels of mere corporeal motion; neither can they exercise any such noble freedom as we constantly find in the wills of men, which are as large and unbounded in all their elections, as reason itself can represent being itself to be.

But before we wholly desert this head we may add some further strength to it from the observation of that conflict which the reasons and understandings of men maintain against the sensitive appetite: and wheresoever the higher powers of reason in a man's soul prevail not, but are vanquished by the impetuosity of sensual affections, through their own neglect of themselves; yet are they never so broken but they may strengthen themselves again: and where they subdue not inordinate passions and affections, yet even there will they condemn men for them. Whereas, were a man all of one piece, and made up of nothing else but matter, these corporeal motions could never check or control themselves; these material dimensions could not struggle with themselves, or by their own strength render themselves anything else than what they are. But this "self-potent life" which is in the soul of man, acting upon itself, and drawing forth its own latent energy, finds itself able to tame the outward man, and bring under those rebellious motions that arise from the mere animal powers, and to tame and appease all those seditions and mutinies that it finds there. And if any can conceive all this to be nothing but a mere fighting of the mal-contented pieces of matter one against another, each striving for superiority and pre-eminence, I should not think it worth the while to teach such a one any higher learning, as looking upon him to be endued with no higher a soul than that which moves in beasts or plants.

V

We shall now consider the soul awhile in a further degree of abstraction, and look at it in those actions which depend not at all upon the body, wherein it doth converse only with its own being. Which we shall first consider in those "mathematical notions" which it contains in itself, and sends forth from within itself; which, as they are in themselves indivisible, and of such a perfect nature as cannot be received or immersed in matter;

so they argue that subject in which they are seated to be of a truly spiritual and immaterial nature. Such as a pure point, line without breadth, latitude abstracted from all profundity, the perfection of figures, equality, proportion, symmetry and asymmetry of magnitudes, the rise and propagation of dimensions, infinite divisibility, and many such-like things; which every ingenious son of that art cannot but acknowledge to be the true characters of some immaterial being, seeing they were never buried in matter, nor extracted out of it: and yet these are transcendently more certain and infallible principles of demonstration than any sensible thing can be. There is no geometrician but will acknowledge angular sections, or the cutting of an arch into any number of parts required, to be most exact without any diminution of the whole; but yet no mechanical art can possibly so perform either, but that the place of section will detract something from the whole. If anyone should endeavour, by any mechanical subtilty, to double a cube, as the Delian oracle once commanded the Athenians, requiring them to duplicate the dimensions of Apollo's altar, he would find it impossible as they did, and be as much laughed at for his pains as some of their mechanics were. If therefore no matter be capable of any geometrical affections, and the apodictical precepts of geometry be altogether inimitable in the purest matter that fancy can imagine, then must they needs depend upon something infinitely more pure than matter, which hath all that stability and certainty within itself which is given to those infallible demonstrations.

And, as we hold it impossible to contact any material quality, which will perpetually spread itself commensurably to the matter it is in, into a mathematical point: so is it much more impossible to extend and stretch forth any immaterial and unbodied quality or notion according to the dimensions of matter, and yet to preserve the integrity of its own nature.

Besides, in these geometrical speculations we find that our souls will not consult with our bodies, or ask any leave of our fancies in what manner, or how far, they shall distribute their own notions by a continued progress of invention; but acting of themselves, are most free and liberal, and make fancy only to serve their own purpose in painting out, not what matter will afford a copy of, but what they themselves will dictate to it;

and, if that should be too busy, silence and control it by their own imperial laws. They so little care for matter in this kind of work, that they banish it as far as may be from themselves, or else chastise and tame the unruly and refractory nature of it, that it should yield itself pliable to their sovereign commands. These *embodied* bodies (for so this present argument will allow me to call them) which our senses converse with, are perpetually justling together, contending irresistibly each for its own room and space, and will not admit of any other into it, preserving their own intervals: but when they are once, in their unbodied nature, entertained in the mind, they can easily penetrate one another. The soul can easily pile the greatest number up together in herself, and by her own force sustain them all, and make them lodge together in the same space: she can easily assemble all those five regular bodies together in her imagination, and blend them together, and then, entering into the very heart and centre of them, discern all their properties and several relations one to another; and thus easily find herself freed from all material or corporeal confinement; showing how all that which we call body rather issued forth by an infinite projection from some mind than that it should exalt itself into the nature of any mental being; and, as the Platonists and Pythagoreans have long since well observed, how our bodies should rather be in our souls than our souls in them.

VI

And now have we traced the immortality of the soul, before we were aware, through three relations. The first is a naked perception of sensible impressions, without any work of reason. The second, a miscellaneous kind of knowledge arising from a collation of its sensations with its own more obscure and dark ideas. The third, discourse and reason, by which the Platonists describe mathematical knowledge which, because it spins out its own notions by a constant series of deductions, knitting up consequences one upon another by demonstrations, is by Proclus called a progressive kind of knowledge; to which he adds a fourth, which we shall now make use of for a further proof of the immortality of the soul. There is, therefore, fourthly, a naked

intuition of eternal truth which is always the same, which never rises or sets, but always stands still in its vertical, and fills the whole horizon of the soul with a mild and gentle light. There are such calm and serene ideas of truth, as shine only in composed souls, and cannot be discerned by any troubled or unstable fancy, that necessarily prove "some permanent and stable essence" in the soul of man, which (as Simplicius on Epictetus well observes) ariseth only "from some immovable and unchangeable cause which is always the same." For these operations about truth we now speak of are not any "chronical energies," as he further expresses it; but the true tokens of an eternal nature, and speak a sameness and a permanency (as Plato is wont to phrase it) in man's soul. Such are the archetypal ideas of justice, wisdom, goodness, truth, eternity, omnipotency, and all those either moral, physical, or metaphysical notions which are either the first principles of science or the ultimate complement and final perfection of it. These we always find to be the same, and know that no exorcisms of material mutations have any power over them: though we ourselves are but of yesterday, and mutable every minute, yet these are eternal, and depend not upon any mundane vicissitudes; neither could we ever gather them from our observation of any material thing, where they were never sown.

If we reflect but upon our own souls, how manifestly do the species of reason, freedom, perception, and the like, offer themselves to us, whereby we may know a thousand times more distinctly what our souls are than what our bodies are? For the former we know by an immediate converse with ourselves, and a distinct sense of their operations; whereas all our knowledge of the body is little better than merely historical, which we gather up by scraps and piecemeal from more doubtful and uncertain experiments which we make of them: but the notions which we have of a mind, that is something within us that thinks, apprehends, reasons, and discourses, are so clear and distinct from all those notions which we can fasten upon a body, that we can easily conceive that, if all body-being in the world were destroyed, yet we might then as well subsist as we now do. For whensoever we take notice of those immediate notions of our own minds, whereby they make themselves known to us, we find no such thing in them as extension or divisibility, which are contained

in every corporeal essence : and having no such thing discovered to us from our nearest familiarity with our own souls, we could never so easily know whether they had any such things as bodies joined to them or not, did not those extrinsical impressions, that their turbulent motions make upon them, admonish them thereof.

But as the more we reflect upon our own minds, we find all intelligible things more clear (as when we look up to the heavens, we see all things more bright and radiant, than when we look down upon this dark earth when the sunbeams are withdrawn from it): so, when we see all intelligible being concentrating together in a greater oneness, and all kind of multiplicity running more and more into the strictest unity, till at last we find all variety and division taken up into a *perfect simplicity*, where all happily conspire together in the most undivided peace and friendship. For though in our contentious pursuits after science we cast wisdom, power, eternity, goodness, and the like into several formalities, that so we may trace down science in a constant chain of deductions; yet, in our naked intuitions and visions of them, we clearly discern that goodness and wisdom lodge together, justice and mercy kiss each other: and all these, and whatsoever pieces else, into which our distorted reason may sometimes break divine and intelligible being, are fast knit up together in the invincible bonds of eternity. And in this sense is that notion of Proclus, descanting Plato's riddle of the soul, "as if it were generated and yet not generated," to be understood; the soul partaking of time in its broken and particular conceptions and apprehensions, and of eternity in its comprehensive and stable contemplations. I need not say that when the soul has once attained to the top of this bright Olympus, it will then no more doubt of its own immortality, or fear any dissipation, or doubt whether any drowsy sleep shall hereafter seize upon it: no; it will then feel itself grasping fast and safely its own immortality, and view itself in the horizon of eternity.

PRAYERS OF THE MYSTICS

Behold, O God, we yield ourselves wholly both inwardly and outwardly in Soul and body with all our powers and energies to Thy will. O Almighty Father, make us Thine own.

—Hatermann.

We command ourselves to Thee, O Father, and to the gracious influence of Thy Holy Spirit. Watch over our senses and our thoughts, root out all pride in us, and give us humility and contrition of heart. Teach us to do according to Thy Will and let all the darkness of our Souls vanish before the beams of Thy brightness. Fill us with holy love, and open to us the treasures of Thy wisdom.

—*St. Augustine.*

We thank Thee, O God, with our whole hearts, and bless Thy name for ever and ever. Thou hast done all things well.

—*B. Albrecht.*

Almighty and Eternal God, we pray Thee enkindle by Thy grace in us to whom Thou hast given the first-fruits of the Spirit, ever more of such holy and ardent desire after perfect union with Thyself, and complete enjoyment of that glorious freedom to which Thou hast called us.

—*R. Rothe.*

O Lord our God, holy and incomprehensible, Who hast bidden the light to shine out of darkness, make us to be children of the Light and of the day and heirs of Thy Everlasting inheritance.

—*Greek Church.*

Look upon us, O Lord, and let all the darkness of our souls vanish before the beams of Thy brightness. Fill us with holy love, and open to us the treasures of Thy wisdom. All our desire is known unto Thee, therefore perfect what Thou hast begun, and what Thy Spirit has awakened us to ask in prayer. We seek Thy face, turn Thy face unto us and show us Thy glory. Then shall our longing be satisfied, and our peace shall be perfect.

—*St. Augustine.*

O gracious Lord God, Who deignest to make of man Thy mirror, that we in one another may behold Thine Image and love Thyself; unto every one of us grant, we beseech Thee, thus to love and thus to be beloved.

—*Christina G. Rossetti.*